SSGIC

Strategic Planning Meeting
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Sequoia National Forest Headquarters - Porterville, CA

Participants

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Overview

The Southern Sierra Geographic Information Cooperative (SSGIC) is an interagency cooperative with five primary stakeholder agencies, Bakersfield BLM, CDF-Tulare unit, Kern Co. Fire Dept., Sequoia National Forest, and Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks. The project's primary goal is to develop a landscape scale framework for interagency fire management planning. The three-year Joint Fire Sciences Program (JFSP) grant funding the SSGIC ended in December of 2002. The goal of this strategic planning meeting was to develop a road map for collaborative fire/fuels management in the southern Sierra Nevada. The original SSGIC program goals were reviewed and future needs and direction reevaluated. Numerous opportunities for the future were discussed, including the ramifications of our identification as a Fire Program Analysis (FPA) system prototype area. *Action items are in italics*.

Review of Original SSGIC Program Goals

Pat Lineback briefly reviewed the original SSGIC program goals and how they were successfully met. A discussion ensued on whether the development of actual fuel plans, preparation of compliance documents, and treatments implementations were required to meet SSGIC goals. It was felt the goals have been met by completing the analysis and establishing a process for collaborative fuels treatment. Because of FPA and other workloads, the fire management officers present decided that no interagency fuel treatment planning would be possible in FY03.

Fire Program Analysis System Update

Bill Kaage presented an overview of the current status of the FPA system program and what the SSGIC can anticipate as a prototype area. Much remains unknown. FPA's first deadline is to complete the initial attack module by 2004. Representatives from the FPA will be meeting with SSGIC June 11 and 12 to begin defining roles.

Identification of Future Goals for the SSGIC

The future of continued, collaborative fire/fuels management planning in the southern Sierra Nevada was discussed. Those present, representing all stakeholder agencies, stated their intent to continue the program and indicated management support as well.

Given this consensus, the group began strategic planning for the next 12 months. The "Findings and Recommendations" previously identified for each of the five focus areas were used as a baseline for strategic goals. The following is a synopsis of the discussion and decisions for each focus area:

Organization/People
- Expansion of the SSGIC – The decision was made to maintain the current geographic boundaries of the SSGIC in favor of a support role to adjacent areas interested in developing similar initiatives. The Tule River Reservation will remain an ad hoc member of the SSGIC.
- Permanent funding strategy – Funding for the existing program manager position for fiscal year 2004 still needs to be secured by the stakeholder agencies. A long term organizational strategy to support the Southern Sierra would include the following four identified positions:
  - Program manager
  - Fire management specialist
  - GIS/Database specialist
  - Fire ecologist
- Support from upper management – Concurrence and support from upper management was identified as a need. This support was obtained from managers at the Jan. 27, 2003 Bakersfield meeting (see notes published on the SSGIC web page under *Find Documents/Meeting and Workshop Summaries*).
- Identified need for a national strategy to support the development and management of fire and fuels data and incentives to support interagency planning are outside the scope of the SSGIC. An executive summary will be developed by the SSGIC to address some of these bigger issues.

Data Development and Management
- Data update and maintenance – The need to update and improve existing datasets is a high priority. SSGIC will be proactive in promoting improved data. Priority datasets for improvement include:
  - Fuels
  - Vegetation classification
  - Land status
  - Roads
  - Enhanced Wildland Urban Interface based on local knowledge

- ➢ Improved metadata - Existing metadata are not robust. In particular, the abstracts are inadequate and too brief. These will be improved. SSGIC will develop tools to improve the process for updating and managing metadata.
- ➢ Development of new datasets – The following are a list of high priority, NEW data needs:
  - Special Management Zones
  - Assets
  - Fire management units
  - Fire planning units
  - Other FPA driven data needs which are not yet known.
- ➢ Landfire prototype area – Landfire is a national effort to develop consistent, nationwide fire related datasets from imagery. SSGIC will pursue becoming a Landfire prototype with the goal of access to improved datasets during the development of Landfire.

Analysis
- ➢ Maintain the currency of analysis products – Analysis products will be updated to reflect new and improved source data when available. Tools will be developed to automate complex spatial analyses. SSGIC will support efforts to develop a nationwide information framework for fire/fuels data development, management, and analysis.
- ➢ Review and update the analysis framework – The SSGIC analysis framework will be reviewed and updated.

Technology and Web Deployment
- ➢ Security – SSGIC will pursue the following security needs that are becoming increasingly important.
  - Web server security – SSGIC contracted the development of a security plan for our server. A strategic plan has been developed with the Unites States Geological Survey Rocky Mountain Mapping Center (USGS RMMC), who administer the server, to implement the plan.
  - Sensitive data security – Currently, all data on the SSGIC server is available to the public both for viewing and download. However, we anticipate the need to identify as sensitive some datasets from a national security, cultural, or environmental perspective. The SSGIC final report will encourage the National Fire Offices to develop national policy regarding fire and fuels data sensitivity and security.
  - Ensuring ArcIMS managers access – All federal agencies are recognizing the need to improve security to their Local Area Networks with firewalls and a variety of other security measures. Collectively, these have made interagency communication, on which the SSGIC server depends, increasingly difficult. SSGIC will implement and ensure continued system level remote access to SSGIC data and map services to stakeholder agencies.
- ➢ Technology transfer – SSGIC will provide more training opportunities for agency staff to effectively utilize the information currently available. Several individuals commented on the need for more outreach and training to existing agency staffs. *Outreach by Anne Birkholz will continue to be stressed*.
- ➢ Effectiveness of the website – It was agreed that with high speed connections the website is an effective means of delivering information to the public, acknowledging that it is slow via modem. However, SSGIC will pursue increased functionality for agency personnel. This includes:

- Supporting the upgrade of local GIS software to ArcGIS 8.x capable of connecting to an ArcIMS web server and adding a remote map service directly to a local ArcMap project. This means any ArcGIS user would be able to add any SSGIC map service to their local project and use it in conjunction with their local data.
- The ability of users to modify existing data inside their project, such as updating fuel models from personal knowledge. See below under "Other Initiatives: USGS RMMC". In the best case scenario, USGS will team with us to develop this functionality.
- User upload of spatial data via web browser to add new data to a map service or update existing data. For example, to upload a proposed burn plan. This goal is a lower priority than the previous two.
- The user ability to perform server side processing to rerun analyses, such as an updated Flammap output from updated fuels data. This is an ambitious goal and implementation will likely exceed one year.

Interagency Planning
➢ FPA prototype area – The SSGIC has been identified as a FPA prototype area. Initially this includes betatesting the initial attack module and providing feedback to the core team. Some new data development may be required; we only know generally what the FPA data development needs will be.

Other Initiatives
➢ Unites States Geological Survey Rocky Mountain Mapping Center – Through December of 2002, SSGIC server administration, ArcIMS development, website development, and data management occurred via a contract with USGS RMMC. A continuing MOU will provide basic server maintenance through August of 2004. A meeting was held between SSGIC and USGS on April 28, 2003 (see notes published on the web page under *Find Documents/Meeting and Workshop Summaries*). Many of the goals identified at this meeting under data development, analysis, and web deployment are also of interest to the USGS RMMC and there has been discussion on developing a joint JFSP grant proposal with SSGIC and other cooperators beginning in 2004.
➢ National Map pilot area – The National Map is a web based USGS program to deliver nationwide base datasets. They are developing partnerships with local groups as pilot areas and are interested in the SSGIC as a pilot. This would be good exposure. We will find out more about becoming a pilot and pursue it if it does not require significant additional workloads.
➢ Air Quality/Smoke Dispersion – There has been some interest in developing partnerships with the Air Quality and Smoke Dispersion communities. The BlueSky and BlueSkyRAINS programs are developing models for cumulative smoke emissions and dispersion. They may be interested in SSGIC as a betatest site. *Anne Birkholz will call Sue Ferguson, the principal investigator, and gather more information.* This will not be a high priority goal for SSGIC.

Executive Summary
A comprehensive final document of the SSGIC program will be the final deliverable to JFSP. Pat identified the additional need to prepare a brief, executive summary to facilitate wider distribution of the successes of and lessons learned from the SSGIC program. This summary, with supportive language signed by line officers, will be distributed on our website, via links on stakeholder agency

websites, to JFSP, to local political representatives, and to appropriate agency managers. *Each agency will provide SSGIC with a list of names and addresses within their respective agencies to receive the summary.*

Upcoming Meetings
The next general meeting of the SSGIC is scheduled for October 21, 2003.